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LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

100-443887-100

A HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

PRE-REFORMATION PERIOD

BY

T. P. BOULTBEE, LL.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE LONDON COLLEGE OF DIVINITY, ST JOHN'S HALL, HIGHBURY
AND LATE FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



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1879

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PREFACE.

It is to be presumed that a reason may be assigned for every book which is written. It may not always be evident to the reader, but the author must be conscious of some cause which moved him to write.

In the present instance the moving cause was the lack of any work which seemed to the writer to trace the long story of the Church of England with sufficient brevity and sufficient fulness. Dry epitomes there are in abundance. Scholarly researches into the most remote past come forth year by year. The history of portions of the long centuries, or personal narrative, has been often written with appreciative genius. But there seemed more than room for a connected narrative which might be useful to one who is commencing acquaintance with English Church history, and which might also possess sufficient interest for the general reader. The Church of England is at once old and new. It has been reformed, but its heritage has come down to it through more than a millennium. To trace the main lines of national Church life ever leading on steadfastly towards the divinely foreknown new birth at the Reformation, and at the same time to gather up

step by step by the wayside notes, personal, legal, or antiquarian, which might serve to illustrate the past or to account for the present, has been the object of the author. He has allowed, as far as seemed possible in so limited an area, some writer of each age to speak his own words and breathe his own sentiments. If some other ancient writer may somewhat vary the utterance, yet by this means only the pulse of the national heart can be felt beating, however faintly, in what would otherwise be a modernised narrative; and thus only can the life of the past centuries breathe a still perceptible life into the pages.

All history, even the most exhaustive chronicles, even the files of the *Times*, which day by day sweeps into its columns the news of the whole earth, must be a selection. The more brief the history, the more difficult becomes the exercise of judgment in selecting and of tact in reporting. Here comes the personal element in the authorship. To choose this, to reject that; to condense, even with a conscious sense of dryness, one half century, to give the reins to a more flowing narrative in another; to pass without comment twenty lives, to criticise and analyse the principles of another—this is the anxiety of choice, this is where one mind will hardly run parallel with another. Yet the author hopes that, though other minds might have exercised the prerogative of selection otherwise, it may be acknowledged upon the whole that he has thrown down no *disjecta membra* of past ages, but a collection of facts grouped into an organised body of history, which possesses life and advances ever steadily onwards to the end.

By many minds it will be reckoned a blemish that these pages have been written from a national rather than from an ecclesiastical point of view. If the ecclesiastical life were identical with the spiritual life, the blemish would be acknowledged. But feeling, as the author does most keenly, that the case is otherwise, and that when the ecclesiastical life was most vigorous, even dominating the civil life of the nation, then the spiritual pulse throbbed most feebly, and was failing even unto the faintness that comes before death, he must maintain his position. He would desire to judge fairly and gently the great men of old in State and Church. They played the part which Providence assigned them. They led the nation on, not knowing whither it was going. They did their work in building up this England which we have inherited. They are our forefathers, we should speak of them reverently. We owe them gratitude for many deeds of high courage, for the foundations of justice and of empire which they laid, for much wise forethought and political sagacity. In all this to the great ecclesiastics must be adjudged by no means the least share of well-merited fame. But their eminent services cannot inspire in the author's mind a sympathy with a system which he deems untrue.

The national point of view, then, has been that from which these pages are written. And the national point of view is distinctly anti-papal. It has been so for full three hundred years, and for another full three hundred years before that. Why should this be deemed controversial or sectarian? It may be both, but it need be neither. For in very fact the papal thread is that which runs down through all those centuries. It gives

unity to their consideration, and, apart from its guidance, there is nothing but unintelligible confusion. Therefore it has suggested the arrangement of the following chapters.

With regard to the materials for this history, the author can only profess diligence in research, and an earnest effort for accuracy in the use of that which has come to his hand. All persons of historical information know the sources which lie open to investigation, and they know also how easy it is to throw together references at the foot of the page which may bespeak multifarious learning. The distinguished scholars who have pursued laborious investigations for the last forty years have not indeed revolutionised history, for its main landmarks are immutable, but they have poured floods of light upon it illuminating its darkest recesses. The names of Kemble, of Reeve, of Freeman, of Stubbs, of the careful editors of the Rolls Series, and many more will at once rise to the mind. And it was in no small degree because these men had laboured, and because it seemed that such a history as the present might now be written more lucid than those of old because of the light which they had kindled, that the author undertook this work.

It seemed undesirable in such a volume to multiply references, or to make a display of reading. But in all leading portions the authorities mainly followed have been carefully stated, little as their scanty mention will set forth the manifold labour. Bearing in mind the pleasure and benefit of the general reader, quotations have been almost entirely stripped of their Latin dress, and have been presented in English more or less literal,

paraphrastic, original or borrowed, as seemed in each case needful or sufficient.

Briefly, then, the author would say, that his object in writing has been not to set forth his individual opinions, though these are not dissembled, but to represent in lucid narrative how things came to be as they are in this Church of England. Dealing with so many diversified details and often complicated technicalities, and having only the rare intervals of a laborious life at his disposal, he cannot but fear lest the accuracy he has desired may here or there have evaded his pursuit. In this case kindly criticism, or even the more severe judgment which may fall to his lot, will bring the needful correction. It is hoped it may not be a presumptuous desire that in course of time this may stand as the first volume of a more or less continuous History of the Church of England. But a disposing Providence alone can bring about the realisation of that wish. Meanwhile the present volume is at least an earnest and conscientious effort to discover and declare the truth.

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Erratum.

Page 27, line 30, *for* sectro *read* sectio

HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY CELTIC CHURCHES.

THE great English people, 'the English folk' of their ancient chronicles, owe little in the organisation of Church or State to the tribes which dwelt before them in the plains and forests of the old Britannia. The Franks, another Teutonic race, who became dominant in Gaul, dwelt among its former inhabitants, accepted their religion, acknowledged their bishops, preserved their cities, and at last adopted their language. Thus the French Church boasts a continuity of history and succession from that of Gaul. On the other hand, the English people, commonly styled Saxons, swept the Briton before them from the face of the earth. His tongue, his institutions, his religion perished. A new race, a new language, held the land. The Church of England, as distinguished from the British Church, was a fresh and vigorous growth from the end of the sixth century. It coloured and it received colour from 'the English folk,' whose characteristics it reproduced in their strength and their weakness.

Yet that new English Church had its relations to the older Christianity of the British isles. It is, therefore, necessary first to exhibit the history of the Celtic Churches, whether those which the English subverted, or those from which they received some of the most venerated of their teachers.

The genuine facts of the earlier portions of that history are but few, and the merest skeleton might sufficiently produce them. It might, indeed, be possible to prolong the recital considerably were it wise to dwell upon the legends with which subsequent ages peopled the void of former centuries. In civil history the diligence of unknown authors constructed the marvellous story of an ancient British empire, originating with the fall of Troy, and expiring after a revived brilliancy in the exploits of Arthur, king of men. Geoffrey of Monmouth and his compeers, with the sober gravity of veracious chroniclers, related the history to the twelfth century, which with equal gravity received it. The Scottish writers of the next century, not to be outdone, constructed an equally elaborate series of Caledonian sovereigns, in like manner drawing their original from wandering Grecian princes.¹ Their princely blood and regal descent thus established gained for David King of Scotland and his successors the imperial right of unction from the Pope. For of old time the kings of France and England alone shared this with the Emperor. But this was not all. By the order of James VII. the portraits of the whole series were imagined and painted to deck the walls of his restored palace of Holyrood, where they still attract the astonished and bewildered gaze of the perplexed tourist. The Englishman has long been content to abandon his line of Trojan princes

¹ See Burton's *Hist.*, iv. 126.

to the elfin land of Spenser's 'Faery Queen.'¹ But it is only of recent years that the Scottish patriot has permitted a doubt to be cast on Buchanan's roll of the ancient Caledonian empire.

It cannot be said that the ecclesiastical historians were as successful as the civil in filling up that vacuum which they, equally with nature, abhor. But their creations have been sufficiently bold, and deprived of these we shall have but scanty matter wherewith to supply this first chapter of the History of the Church of England.

The genuine materials of the early history of the British Church have been long ago collected, and are at once subjoined.

Clement² of Rome, writing in the first century, says of St. Paul that 'he taught righteousness to the whole world and came to the bound of the west.'

Tertullian³ (about A.D. 200), in a highly rhetorical passage, speaks of 'regions of the Britons, inaccessible to the Romans, being subjugated to Christ.'

Origen⁴ (about A.D. 239), in his homilies, in general and rhetorical language, speaks of Britain possessing the light of the Gospel.

In another passage, in a similar strain, he⁵ says that very many of the Britons, Germans, &c. had 'not yet heard the word of the Gospel.'

These are all the passages written within the first three hundred years of the Christian era which speak of British Christianity. The first, indeed, does so only constructively, and would not have been quoted were it not for the use which has been so freely made of it, and the theories which have been built upon it.

¹ *Faery Queen*, b. ii. c. 10.

² 1 Ep. c. 5.

³ *Adv. Jud.* vii.

⁴ Origen, in Ezek. iv., et in Luc. vi.

⁵ Hom. 24 in Matt. xxiv.

Passing onward, Eusebius, writing in the first half of the fourth century, in his *History of the Church* omits all notice of this island ; but elsewhere he tells us¹ that 'some of the disciples came to the uttermost parts of the earth, and others passed the ocean to those called the British Isles.'

Again he quotes the Emperor Constantine as saying that² 'beginning at the Sea of Britain he had driven away evil and recalled the human race to the law of God, that our most blessed faith might increase through Almighty guidance.'

An anecdote recorded by Sozomen as well as by Eusebius³ proves that Constantius, the father of Constantine, at least valued those among his court and attendants who openly professed their Christianity, as being persons on whom he might rely. But this does not directly bear on the Christianity of Britain itself though Constantius often resided in the island and died at York. Nor does the following expression of Sozomen⁴ (about 443) throw any further light on the history. 'It was no easy matter to dwell among the Gauls, or Britons, or neighbouring peoples among whom Constantine embraced the religion of the Christians before his expedition against Maxentius.'

These and many other passages brought together from Athanasius, and other writers of the fourth century, are only passing allusions to what is otherwise indubitable, the existence of the Christian Church in Britain in their days. No proof can be needed that after the conversion of Constantine Britain was christianised in the same sense as the rest of the empire whose fortunes it shared.

¹ *Dem. Evan.*, iii. 5.

² *Vit. Constant.*, ii. 28.

³ *Vit. Constant.*, i. 16.

⁴ Sozomen, *Hist.*, i. 5.

But, failing earlier intimations, it will be necessary to trace any historical statements of writers of the fourth or subsequent centuries which look back to the origin of Christianity in Britain, in order to ascertain if traditionally or otherwise they were in possession of any authentic information. Of such references the following may be noted. Theodoret about 423 wrote, 'But our fishermen and publicans and the leather-worker ¹ (St. Paul) brought the evangelical laws to all, not only to the Romans, but the Scythians, Sarmatians, and Britons.' In another passage where he speaks of St. Paul visiting 'Spain and the islands scattered in the sea,' he refers to the Mediterranean rather than the British islands.

Gildas was a British writer of uncertain date, falling within the century 450–550, during the progress of the Saxon conquest. He wrote a work of mingled lamentation and bitter denunciation over the woes and sins of the suffering Britons. This much is clear. He refers to Holy Scripture most copiously, but he is absolutely ignorant of any historical or even legendary account of the origin of Christianity in Britain. He has no information and he has no records bearing on this, nor has he ever heard of any. 'If there ever were any,' he says, 'they have been consumed in the fires of the enemy [the Saxons], or have accompanied our exiled countrymen to distant lands. He must therefore be guided by foreign documents, often fragmentary.'

Having then spoken in general terms of the conquest of Britain by the Romans, of the revolt of Boadicea, and the sanguinary vengeance which followed, he proceeds thus: 'Meanwhile these islands, remote from the visible sun, received the beams of light, that is, the

¹ Or skin-cutter, from an idea that his tents were made of skins.

holy precepts of Christ—at the latter part, as we know, of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar . . . These rays of light were received with lukewarm minds by the inhabitants, but they took root among some of them in a greater or less degree, until the nine years' persecution of the tyrant Diocletian.' Nothing can well be clearer than that Gildas had no information of the kind now sought. He knows that the Christian religion originated in the reign of Tiberius, and that it spread into Britain with indifferent success, yet so as to offer some mark for the persecution of Diocletian when the third century had run its course.

Looking back now to the scanty materials before us, we are able to say this, and this only. It was known to Christian writers soon after the year 200 that Christianity had penetrated into Britain. To say more than this would not be writing history. This impenetrable darkness can be strange only to those who have never asked themselves how much they really know of the history of the propagation of the faith in the first and second centuries. Men wrote, suffered, and laboured for the truth, and were content to be forgotten. Who can tell the name of the first Christian missionary who entered the gates of the mighty Rome itself, and looking up to the temple of the great Capitoline Jove, knew that the day must come, though centuries yet intervened, when the tutelary Roman idol must fall? Who can tell the history of the foundation of leading churches of old, of Alexandria, of Carthage, of Spain, of Gaul? The 'grain of mustard seed' had been cast into the earth, and its produce was springing up and spreading, but none knew what was to be the girth of its trunk, or the ample sweep of its branches; so none registered its progress, or noted the labours of those who tended it.

Leaving the first three centuries, a little more light will dawn upon us for the remainder of the British period. Early in the fourth century, as Gildas relates, speaking of the times of Diocletian, 'God kindled among us bright luminaries of holy martyrs, whose places of burial and martyrdom, if they had not been destroyed for our many crimes by the barbarians [Saxons], would have kindled the flame of divine love in the minds of beholders. I mean St. Alban of Verulam, Aaron and Julius of Caerleon, and the rest of both sexes who in different places stood firm in the array of Christ.' Gildas proceeds in rhetorical language to make general assertions with regard to the sufferings of the victims in that persecution. He is probably writing without any special information, and attributing to supposed British sufferers what he read in Eusebius or other writers of the martyrdoms in other lands. For we are expressly informed by Eusebius, Sozomen,¹ and others that Constantius, the father of Constantine, protected Christianity in Gaul and Britain. There is reason, indeed, to believe that this protection was not complete, and that Constantius showed some deference to the persecuting edicts. Thus, we may admit some belief in the fact of the suffering of St. Alban and his associates; but this will require separate notice.

Gildas is no more explicit in his account of Arianism in Britain, of which he says, that 'fatal as a serpent, vomiting its poison from beyond the sea, it caused deadly dissension, and inflicted dreadful wounds on a country ever desirous to hear something new, and remaining constant long to nothing.' Rhetoric of this kind is usually a cloak for lack of knowledge; at any rate it leaves its reader in darkness.

¹ Sozomen, i. 6.

We are, however, able to add one or two facts to this scanty allusion. There is sufficient authority for asserting that three British bishops were present at the Synod of Arles summoned by Constantine in 314 to consider the Donatist difficulty. Their names are even added. Eborius of York; Restitutus of London; Adelfius (perhaps of Caerleon). It is, of course, possible, though quite unknown, that Britain was represented at the great Council of Nicæa; at any rate Athanasius says that all the Churches, those of Spain, Britain, and Gaul, and most of the Churches of the East, accepted its decrees. Other brief notices scattered in various writings show that in the fourth century the British Church shared in the anxieties and deliberations of the frequent synods held during the varying phases of the Arian controversy. At one assembled at Ariminum we are told,¹ that the British and Gallic bishops declined the imperial allowance, being able to maintain themselves, with the exception of three from Britain, who were obliged to accept the public provision.

When we have added to this that Pelagius, made famous by his controversy with the great Augustine, was of British origin, though Britain was not the scene of his teaching, we shall have noticed all, or nearly all, that is known of the British Church whilst it occupied what is now known as England. Jerome,² with his offensive rudeness, calls him a 'stupid fellow overloaded with Scotch porridge.' The account of the rise and fall of Pelagianism in Britain is given by Bede.³ But as he is, in fact, adopting the account of a much earlier writer, Constantius, the author of the 'Life of Germanus,' it would be desirable to quote the earlier authority were

¹ Sulpicius Severus, ii. 41.

² In Jerem. Prolog.

³ *Ecc. Hist.*, i. 17.

it not that the verbosity and inflated style of such authors would load the weary page with ten sentences of rhetoric to one of fact. It may suffice that through the luxuriance of language we can dimly descry that two Gallic bishops, Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes, were sent across the Channel to combat the heresy. They taught with authority through the whole country, and finally encountering the Pelagian teachers, they 'poured forth torrents of eloquence, with apostolic and evangelical thunderings; vanity was convicted, perfidy confused.' 'The accused confessed that they could not reply. The people were scarcely restrained from laying violent hands on them, and accepted the decision with a shout.'

However, it required a second visit of Germanus, this time accompanied by Severus, Bishop of Treves, to complete the work. On this occasion we have an account of a miracle, described in the genuine hagiological style, followed by preaching, and the banishment from Britain of all the Pelagian teachers. As Germanus died about 448, soon after this visit, these transactions must have been among the very last in which the British Church was engaged before the Saxon invasion swept the larger portion of it from the face of the earth.

Here we might close the history of the early British Church. But we must not wholly omit notice of that which is legendary or conjectural, and has often been grafted on the slender stem of the true history.

It has been seen that Gildas, a member of the British Church during the time of the Saxon invasions, was entirely unacquainted with the origin of Christianity in Britain. The Saxon writer Bede, however, two hundred years later, thought himself justified in giving the fol-

lowing distinct and positive statement :¹—‘ In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 156, whilst the holy Eleutherus presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of Britain, wrote to him entreating that by commission from him he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained the effect of his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquillity, until the time of the emperor Diocletian.’

This story has been so often repeated, and was so generally adopted and amplified by the uncritical ages which followed, that some remarks upon it are needful, and it is at least of some interest to know its origin. It seems certain that the document from which Bede obtained it was one of those brought to him from Rome by Nothelm, who was allowed access to the various archives there. In fact there can be little doubt that it was taken from the Catalogue² of Roman Pontiffs, in which these words occur (speaking of Eleutherus), ‘ he received a letter from Lucius king of Britain, desiring to be made a Christian by a commission from him.’ Further, it appears that this passage is not traced in the older form of that document, but that it is found in a later form of it written about 530. It belongs, therefore, to the Roman mint, of which it bears the characteristic stamp. Its date of issue, too, is the time when Rome was already nursing the desire to be accounted ‘ mother and mistress of all the Churches.’ That subsequent writers, both Welsh and English, received the story and added to it in the mediæval fashion, and that a letter from Eleutherus to Lucius was in due time forthcoming, need not here be said. Modern writers, aware of the intrinsic difficulties involved even

¹ *Ecc. Hist.*, i. 12.

² Haddan and Stubbs, i., App. A.

in the most rudimentary form of the story, have notwithstanding been frequently unwilling entirely to abandon it. Many webs of ingenious speculation have been spun, weaving together conjectures as to whether there may not have been some local British chieftain bearing a name Latinized into Lucius, and tolerated in some part of the island under the Roman rule. There can be no inherent impossibility in such a supposition; but when the historian finds the basis of the story to be a statement in a document inserted by an unknown hand more than four hundred years after the alleged event, in a place fruitful in historical forgeries, and in the interest of the policy of that place, he has no alternative but to dismiss it. It is not history whatever else it may be.

Passing on yet further into the domain of conjecture, a favourite topic has been the supposed preaching of St. Paul himself in Britain. The words of Clement of Rome¹ are here pressed into the service, and the language of Theodoret² is shown to give some countenance to the idea. But Theodoret gives no earlier authority, and seems to be simply paraphrasing in his own style the earlier and vague statements of Clement and of Eusebius.

Conjecture finds some footing for its airy tread in certain other names presenting rather curious coincidences. In 2 Tim. iv. 21, which was undoubtedly written in the reign of Nero, and probably in the year 68, salutations are sent from Pudens, Linus, and Claudia. It further appears from an epigram of Martial, that there was a Claudia Ruffina, a British lady, married to Pudens, a Roman senator. The coincidence of names is undoubtedly striking; but it requires much more

¹ Page 3.

² Page 5.

than such testimony to elevate a conjecture into the rank of an established fact of history, to say nothing of chronological difficulties connected with the date of Martial's writing.

The Welsh traditions embodied in the Triads will receive various degrees of respect from different minds. Whatever may be their value, we may, however, note here that they attribute the origin of Christianity in this island to Bran, the father of Caractacus, who had been taken as a captive to Rome after the defeat of Caractacus, and who, on his return, brought Christianity with him. Some have contended for this as a genuine independent tradition; others would say that it had grown out of supposed historical probabilities in the course of centuries. We may, however, note that the Welsh authority is a thousand years subsequent to the event. The Triads give a conspicuous place to an Arwystli Hen whom they associate with Bran. He is supposed to represent an Aristobulus whom certain apocryphal assertions make St. Paul to have ordained bishop for Britain. And this seems the true account of most of such statements. The seeming tradition is for the most part but a loose and inaccurate reflection of some story of foreign origin. Thus what appear to be several independent and converging authorities are often in truth divergences from a single untrustworthy witness.

If picturesque legend may be permitted to enliven the sober page of history, we may now be allowed to admire the confidence with which it tells us that Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and Martha, his sisters, and some others, were sent afloat by the Jews in a vessel without oars or sails. After grievous sufferings the ship came to shore at Marseilles, where they landed. Crossing over

Gaul, they arrived in Britain, and settled in Glastonbury, where they built the first Christian church. The legend takes various other forms, in which the famous Glastonbury thorn generally finds a place. It is a variety which blooms (at least occasionally) in winter, and was believed to have sprung from Joseph's staff, when, wearied with his journey, he fixed it in the ground.

But the stern evidence of historical criticism shows that not even the rudiments of this wild story were known to the Saxon Church. Ussher and Stillingfleet agree in asserting that there is no trace of it in the Saxon charters or documents, and modern investigation confirms the decision.

Indeed, if we turn to the history of the early Christianity of Britain as it was written by William of Malmesbury,¹ about 1130, we find him to believe the story of Lucius having written to Pope Eleutherus for Christian teachers. 'In consequence preachers came into Britain, the effects of whose labours will remain for ever, although the rust of antiquity may have obliterated their names. By these was built the ancient Church of St. Mary of Glastonbury.' Still he hazards the supposition that if, as some say, the Apostle Philip preached to the Gauls, he may have crossed into Britain also, in which case Glastonbury might have a yet earlier origin. But not a word has he to say about Joseph of Arimathea in this work. Yet in his tract on the antiquity of Glastonbury he brings that saint to the Somerset sanctuary, though not without the qualifying expression '*ut ferunt*,' as they say. The legend gradually grew up in Glastonbury itself after the Conquest.

¹ William of Malmes., 19, 20.

It was adopted in royal charters, and became an object of national pride. As such it was insisted on by the English representatives in the mediæval councils at Constance and elsewhere.¹ After the Reformation it was pressed into the service of the anti-papal controversy by Archbishop Parker,² when historical criticism was in its infancy. He thought, as some seem to think now, that he had made a strong point against papal authority in England by proving that the island owed its earliest Christianity to other teachers than those who were sent by Rome. He believed in the story of King Lucius and Pope Eleutherus; and therefore gladly placed that mission second to an earlier one of Apostolic date. This is the history as Archbishop Parker arranged it in the early days of Elizabeth. The Apostle Philip being the evangelist of Gaul, sent twelve brethren, with Joseph of Arimathea at their head, to preach in Britain. Glastonbury was granted to them, and there they built a church. But this was deserted and left desolate, and in the succeeding century Christianity was reintroduced by the legates sent by Pope Eleutherus to King Lucius. Some records of Joseph's work the archbishop fancied might have been preserved at Rome; by their help the abandoned church at Glastonbury might have been searched for and discovered, and thenceforward held sacred and venerable. Thus the archbishop wove two legends into a seemingly consistent history. It was pardonable to write thus when ancient records had not been sifted, and when no man knew precisely what might be disinterred from the mass of mouldering manuscripts. It is unpardonable now to confuse men's judgment by thrusting upon them mediæval fraud,

¹ Ussher, *Primord.*, p. 23.

² *De Vetustate Eccles. Britan.*, p. 4, ed. 1720.

fancy, or ignorance, as the case may be, as if it possessed any authority beyond its own.

But in the days before criticism it became almost a point of honour to maintain so dignified and ancient a source for British Christianity. Even in the reign of James I. Camden, the father of English antiquarianism, declared¹ that it was a matter which could not be doubted. It is true that St. George's banner only came from the East with the crusaders. Yet the fact that St. Joseph never was adopted as the national tutelary saint, like St. James of Spain, or St. Denis of France, seems to betray the late origin of his story. It was, after all, a local fable, not a legend which had grown into the heart of the nation from early times. But it was a legend which beyond most others lent itself to romance and the wildest flights of fancy. Glastonbury, the Arthurian 'Isle of Avalon,' is the very realm of fantasy. The Holy Graal,² the dish, bowl, or cup, which received the blood from the wounds of the Saviour, and was brought by Joseph from the Holy Land, floats vaguely before the imagination in connexion with Avalon. But history can only glance into the land of imagination which spreads its fair lawns and uplands far beyond her border. She must pass on her careful track, leaving it to the mediæval poet to sing of the marvels of Glastonbury.

Three hawthorns also, that groweth in Werall,
Do burge and bear green leaves at Christmas
As fresh as other in May, when the nightingale
Wrests out her notes musical as pure as glass ;
Of all woods and forests she is the chief chantress.
In winter to sing if it were her nature,
In Werall she might have a plainé place,

¹ Camden's *Britannia*, art. *Glastonbury*.

² *Joseph of Arimathea*, ed. by Rev. W. W. Skeat, for the Early English Text Society.

On those hawthorns to show her notes clear.
Thanks be given to him that in heaven sitteth,
That flourisheth his works so on the ground,
And in Glastonbury, *Quia mirabilia fecit.*

These legendary notices naturally lead to some further consideration of the history of St. Alban. We may hope that it would be unreasonable incredulity to reject the venerated name of the protomartyr of Britain. But it is necessary to ascertain on what testimony that belief rests. The account of the martyrdom given by Bede is a familiar narrative, but he wrote more than 400 years afterwards, and the question at once arises what was the earlier authority on which he depended. We find it in the life of Germanus, written by Constantius about 480, who describes that bishop as visiting the tomb of Alban the martyr, and taking from it some of the sacred earth. We find it more precisely in Gildas, a portion of whose narrative has been already quoted. The remainder runs as follows: 'The first of these martyrs, St. Alban, for charity's sake saved a confessor who was pursued by his persecutors and was on the point of being seized. He concealed him in his house, and then changed clothes with him. In this he imitated the example of Christ, who laid down His life for His sheep, for he exposed himself in the other's clothes to be persecuted in his stead. So pleasing to God was this conduct, that between his confession and martyrdom he was honoured with the performance of wonderful miracles in presence of the impious blasphemers who were carrying the Roman standards. Like the Israelites of old, who trod dryfoot an unfrequented path whilst the ark of the Covenant stood some time in the midst of Jordan, so also the martyr opened a path across the noble river Thames, whose waters stood like

precipices on either side. Seeing this the first of his executioners was stricken with awe, and from a wolf became a lamb ; so that he thirsted for martyrdom, and boldly underwent that for which he thirsted.'

Into this grandiose and legendary form all hagiology had by that time been cast. Prodigies of diverse kinds were copied with variations from the life of one saint into that of another. But in the midst of these wonders this much appears to be the record of a fact. When Germanus visited Britain about 429, there was a locality associated by tradition with the martyrdom of Alban. This was 125 years after the Diocletian persecution, if that date is to be preferred among the differing statements. It certainly is not a very strong basis for credence. But if the passion of that age for relics of martyrs throws a strong presumption against the truth of a large part of its legends, it must be granted, on the other hand, that if such a martyr did suffer, the fact and the place would not readily be allowed to fall into oblivion. Whatever becomes of the legendary additions, it is a satisfaction to hope that we need not abandon 'the protomartyr of Britain.'

Bede¹ expanded the legendary parts of the story yet more, either from the accretions it had gained from frequent narration, or from what he would deem the right mode of presenting a history of martyrdom. The monastic writers have still further amplified the legend, one of the most curious additions being the probable transformation of a cloak into a saint. The earliest version of the story, that of Gildas, makes Alban suffer for sheltering a 'confessor,' that is, a persecuted man, by exchanging clothes with him and appearing in his stead. Bede, adding further particulars, says that the sheltered

¹ *Ecc. Hist.*, i. 7.

person was a certain clergyman whose 'habit or cassock' Alban assumed. The 'confessor' continues to be nameless in the versions of the story until after the Conquest, when we find him recognised under the name of Amphibalus,¹ with elaborate accounts of his subsequent martyrdom. The long loose cloak worn by ecclesiastics, or indeed by others also, was called *amphibalum*. The supposition, therefore, is that the nameless man received his appellation from the cloak which plays so prominent a part in the narrative, and thus stands forth in legendary history as St. Amphibalus, martyr. The great abbey of St. Albans gloried for many centuries in the possession of the supposed body of its patron saint. Roger of Wendover,² one of St. Alban's own monks, may give the story, as it had come to be told about the year 1200, how the body of the protomartyr was discovered. Offa, the potent king of the Mercians, was admonished by an angel to disinter and enshrine the sacred remains. Accordingly, with his new Archbishop of Lichfield and a great concourse of people, to Verulamium went the king. 'The memory of the martyr had perished, and the place of his burial had been forgotten for about 344 years. . . . and was at this time utterly unknown.' A light from heaven shone upon the spot, and the wooden coffin enclosing his remains was discovered. Then arose, and thenceforward flourished, the great abbey till its time was come, and the reign of imposture ceased.

But, for whatever reasons, men had already connected the spot with Alban's name. For Bede, in his story of the martyrdom, had described it in language from which it might even now be recognised. It seems like a sketch from memory. Whether it was anything

¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth.

² R. Wendover in ann. 793.

more than an expansion of the older narrative by Gildas it is now impossible to say. But they chose well who selected their sanctuary. The crumbling remains of the Roman city lie on a site ascending most gently above the rivulet which supplied it with water and formed the pool which protected its northern flank. On the opposite side of the stream the land rises with a somewhat steeper ascent to the crown of a long hill. There most wisely king Offa's advisers perpetuated, or chose, the scene of St. Alban's martyrdom, at the top of a sunny slope. There in after years rose the great church, which is now the cathedral of a diocese to which it has given its name. It possesses its peculiar grandeur, but it is impossible to gaze other than regretfully on its walls. The wanderer may still trace the massive foundations of the rampart with which the Romans begirt ancient Verulam. But if he would seek the battle-mented superstructure, he must look on the abbey walls; there he will see course after course of the Roman brick for which the abbots ransacked and dismantled the venerable city. The church is a noble pile, however little graceful in its outlines, but what might we not give if the abbots had but left us old Verulamium!

However, the monks found St. Alban in their own fashion, and built gloriously over that which they found. But what manner of wooden coffin that might be, and whose relics those poor bones and that dust might be before which men bowed and imagined miracles to be done in all those long centuries, it is not pleasant to think upon.

But legend breeds legend, and miracles of this class must be mated with other miracles. St. Alban had been found and held in honour for some 500 years, but where was St. Amphibalus? Thus questioned the

monks in the year 1177, which may have been a little before our informant entered the abbey. The questioning received its answer.¹ St. Alban himself appeared to a dependent of the abbey, or at least a devotee of the church, and indicated the spot. The story spread far and wide; multitudes flocked to the place, which seemed like a market, and miracles were rumoured which increased the excitement. The day of St. Alban came: alms, fastings, and processions were prescribed, and the people were wrought up to the needful pitch of expectation. The saint was somewhat vengeful on those who mocked, for some such might be found even there. In this mood he wrought a wonder not quite in accordance with modern temperance principles, which may illustrate the unity of such English gatherings whatever their pretext, whether an excursion train in the nineteenth or expected miracles in the twelfth century. The English throat is apt to feel a longing for its native ale. 'One Algar of Dunstable brought a cart with a cask of ale.' There were no excise laws before his eyes, and he meant to sell it. 'A poor sick man begged of him, for the love of the martyr, a small draught to quench his thirst. Algar, incensed at his request, answered that not out of regard to the martyr, but for the profit of sale he was there. Forthwith both ends of his cask fell out, and so through the saint's interposition the poor man and many others with him drank as much as they would. So through the martyr's hand, wickedness was repressed and the devotion of the faithful met its reward.' The monk does not say whether the ale was good, but certainly it is a reward which would be very much to the taste of such an

¹ R. of Wendover in ann. 1178.

assembly of 'the faithful' as might be gathered now out of the Hertfordshire villages.

Unhappily Algar's own account is not on record. But it is much to be feared that when he drove his wearied horse into Dunstable that night, he may have told another story to his sympathising spouse: how some disorderly scoundrels—roughs they would be called at a fair in these days—had surrounded his cart, insisted on his giving them drink, had broken his cask and consumed his good liquor, and finally, denouncing him to the monks as a blasphemer of the saint, had sent him bruised and impoverished home again. But this side of these quaint stories found no encouragement in the monastic archives.

Time went on, diggers were at work, the abbot and the brethren were at dinner, while one was reading the whole of the cherished St. Alban's legend. News was brought in that the bodies were found. Ten martyrs in all lay in the place of search. St. Amphibalus was there with a knife in his skull and another in his breast in conformity with ancient story. They carried forth St. Alban to meet his brother. Generally the brethren found him heavy, now he seemed so light that he appeared to be flying. So it was that St. Amphibalus was found at last 'on the 25th of June, 1177, being the 886th year after his martyrdom.' And so it came to pass that something called by that shadowy name of a cloak, which perhaps was never worn, was added to the deceits which beguiled many a soul until the day of reckoning came. It is melancholy to look upon the ancient building shorn of its glories. It ought to be a sadder thing to know that the worn pavement and the broken shrine testify to the impostures which were

intruded between sinful man and the healing Gospel of Christ.

The history of the ancient British Church before the arrival of the Saxons will appear scanty indeed to those who are not aware how fragmentary our knowledge of that period is. We may close this account with the words of the quaint Fuller when he is ending the Third Century of his 'Church History of Britain': 'This is all I have to say of this century; and must now confess myself as unable to go on, as ashamed to break off; scarce having had of a full hundred years, so many words of solid history. But as I find little, so I will feign nothing; time being better spent in silence than in lying. If any hereafter shall light on more history of these times, let them not condemn my negligence, whilst I shall admire their happiness.'

But, strange to say, the history of the British Church has but little connection with the subsequent Christianity of England. That Church stood for the most part aloof from its Saxon conquerors, hating and disdainful. A more vigorous branch of Celtic Christianity had taken root in Ireland and poured forth its missions with rare profusion, both to the larger sister island and to the continent of Europe. Before the history of Saxon Christianity can be approached, that of the Celtic Churches of Ireland and of Scotland must receive attention.

The Roman dominion had been maintained with some difficulty as far north as the rampart which joined the firths of Forth and of Clyde. Like the rest of the Empire the southern portion of Scotland accepted Christianity after the conversion of Constantine. How far such Christianity had any hold beyond the towns and Roman stations seems at best but a very doubtful

thing. The relics of Roman heathenism are many. Those of ancient Roman Christianity are few¹ indeed even round the principal settlements of Imperial Britain. When the Picts finally broke through the Roman defences, and the Roman arms abandoned Scotland for ever, whatever Christianity remained in that country seems to have been in the south-west. There, among the Picts of Galloway, a certain Ninian had founded a Church. He is described by Bede² as 'a most reverend bishop and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed at Rome in the faith and mysteries of the truth.' The principal seat of his mission was 'Candida Casa,' White House, or Whitherne, in Galloway. This place recurs from time to time in subsequent centuries as the name of a see suffragan to York. It may be stated as a fact that there was a Christian Church, however feeble, in that part of Scotland early in the fifth century.

It has even been said³ that Ninian passed over into Ireland and made known the Gospel there. At any rate, within the first half of the fifth century Ireland received the faith. Palladius is mentioned in Roman narratives as a bishop sent by the Pope for the conversion of that island. If he is not the same as one who is also called Patrick, nothing certain appears of his history. But Patrick is the name indelibly written on the history of Irish Christianity. This much is gathered from what are admitted to be his genuine remains. He was the son of a deacon, and grandson of a presbyter, of the Church. He was born in Britain, was captured and sold as a slave in Ireland. He escaped after some years, and formed the resolution to return as a mis-

¹ Haddan and Stulbs.

² Bede, iii. 4; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, b. ii. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, b. ii. 1

sionary to the scene of his captivity.¹ Many others, both Gauls and Britons, were associated with him in his labours, but his name stands preeminent. It may be sufficient here to say, that early in the sixth century, that which followed the labours of Patrick and his associates, Ireland had become Christian. The Church thus founded in Ireland had some remarkable characteristics. Chief among these may be named a multiplicity of bishops and a singular development of the monastic life. Monasticism, as it was known to the early Irish Church, must have been of that earlier and freer form which overran Europe at the close of the fourth century, long before the reforms of Benedict of Nursia. Coming from the deserts of Egypt, the frenzy of monasticism spread with inconceivable rapidity. It needed no lordly monastery. An encampment of huts made of planks, wattles, and reeds, round the simple oratory of the teacher or saint, and surrounded by an earthen rampart with a ditch, sufficed, and sprang up without delay or preparation. Nor did it require the vow of obedience, or the subjection to the stiffer routine which afterwards followed. Such settlements were to be seen in Gaul as well as in Britain. It may have been found of real practical utility among the heathen tribes, thus to gather for mutual instruction, as well as protection against the vices and barbarism which surged around. At any rate the early history of Irish Christianity is the history of its monasteries, and not of diocesan episcopacy. The special singularity is, that in these monasteries were many bishops of indefinite numbers, and connected with no necessary diocesan rule. This is a peculiarity which has led to much controversy. The Presbyterian has seen in it a proof of the original iden-

¹ Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 23.

tity of the bishop and the presbyter. On the other hand, the Episcopalian points out that one¹ of these bishops was always selected to perform the rite of ordination, or, if present, to consecrate the elements in the Eucharist. Still the government was in the hands of the abbot, who was usually not a bishop. So Bede,² speaking of one of their chief settlements, says that it 'has for its ruler an abbot who is a presbyter, to whose direction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, must be subject.' The Saxon Chronicle, too, under the year 565 notes: 'Now in Ii (Iona) there must ever be an abbot and not a bishop; and all the Scottish bishops ought to be subject to him; because Columba was an abbot and not a bishop.'

From this brief note of the history of the Irish Church we may return to the shores of Scotland.

At the time now before us the Scoti or Scots were the Irish people, and Scotia continued for many years to be the name usually given to Ireland. Some centuries passed before this nomenclature gave way, and the Scots, at last unknown in their native land, were confused with other tribes to whose glorious history they have given their name. It will be sufficient for the present purpose thus to describe the political geography of Scotland early in the sixth century, about the time when Ireland may be considered finally Christianised. The heathen Picts occupied the larger part of Scotland north of the Forth. The Britons of Strathclyde still held the territory which included Cumberland and stretched away westward and northward to the firth of Clyde. The Scots from Ireland had colonised a district which may be approximately identified with Argyleshire and some neighbouring islands,

¹ Reeve's *Adamnan*, p. 340.

² Bede, iii. 4.

and was generally known as the kingdom of Dalriada. The Saxons, or more accurately the Angles, had seized on the eastern lowlands, and held the land from the Tweed to the Forth. The Scots were to be the source of Christianity to nearly all this and more besides.

Amongst the most illustrious of the Irish monastic saints was Colum or Columba. Born¹ about 521, he was devoted to the Church from his childhood, and became known as Columcille or Colum of the Church. He belonged to the royal house of the Neills, of the north of Ireland. Many monasteries were founded by him in his own country, and looked up to him as their head. Causes, on which it is not needful here to dwell, led to his abandonment of his native land. In the year 563 he sought a new home among his kinsmen, the Scots of Dalriada, who had brought with them from Ireland the Christianity of that island. On the confines of the Scots and the Picts, Columba obtained the grant of the island now generally known as Iona. There he planted his famous monastery, which may well be deemed sacred ground by every man of English or of Scottish blood.

Doubtless the mind is variously affected by the associations which cling to the ruined seats of ancient worship or magnificence, as well as by their surrounding scenery. Fountains in its lordly park, Melrose begirt with its prosaic Scotch cemetery, Tintern in its wooded glen, excite varied reflections or call up diverse emotions. The stern architecture of the grey Iona with its tower rising against the wild Atlantic sky, while the ceaseless roar of the ocean sounds as it sounded in Columba's ear, speaks of endurance and hardihood. Legend says that Columba steered ever northward until he had found a shore from which the Ireland he had

¹ Reeve's *Adamnan*, p. 225.

left was no longer visible. The tale has surely done injustice in ascribing the unwisdom of mere passion to the venerable man. He chose well for his purpose. His favoured island was safeguarded by the ocean until the Northmen brought desolation to all those shores. Its limits are circumscribed, but they are not encroached upon by barren mountains, though slight rocky eminences break the force of the Atlantic gales. Fertility may be ascribed to its soil, of a degree sufficient to reward the labours of the simple cultivator, and to supply a hardy community. Severed by a narrow sound from the larger island of Mull, which lies at the portal of the deep sea loch of Linnhe, it enjoyed ready access to the great lakes where now the Caledonian Canal joins two oceans. Thus the missionary turned the great mountain barrier, and his light coracle sailed without impediment into the heart of the Pictish land, and to the doors of its king. Columba's true history must be that of the sagacious missionary, not the wild legend of a passionate fugitive. No mere accident planted him thus on the skirts of his brethren, the Scots of Dalriada, and at the very porch of the Picts, whose apostle he became.

It need scarcely be added that not a trace can well remain of the primitive settlement of Columba. Venerable, and almost weird in their antiquity, as the ruins of church and cloister seem to the modern traveller, they were the work of long subsequent centuries. At a date subsequent to the Norman Conquest, the Cluniac monks brought with them into that ocean fastness the laws and the architecture of their continental home. And window and arch which still remain speak of centuries yet later, and of work hardly finished when the Reformation left all to solitude once more. The

rude masonry of the chapel of St. Oran, one of Columba's associates, may indeed belong to a far more remote period, in spite of the Norman doorway and other archways, which seem rather the insertions of subsequent ages.

It is to this island that the preceding notes on Scottish history have been tending, and it is from this that multiplied ramifications must yet be traced. The community settled there by Columba brought with them the peculiarities already named as belonging to the Irish Church—a pervading monasticism, and a subordination, as well as multiplicity, of the episcopal order.

From Iona the personal influence of Columba rapidly spread through the land of the Picts. The king,¹ whose seat was near Inverness, was baptised. Monasteries of the Irish type, Christian colonies in the midst of the uncultured heathen, were placed in suitable localities, and within some twelve years the Picts and Scots (in other words, Scotland north of the Forth and Clyde) were ostensibly Christian. When Columba died, 597, he left behind him a Church organised in the peculiar manner which has been already described—episcopal but not diocesan. The primacy was in the hands of the abbots of Iona, of which Bede² thus speaks: ‘This monastery for a long time held the preeminence over those of the Northern Scots and all those of the Picts, and had the direction of their people.’ It is not necessary for our purpose to speak of Columba's successors, or the revival of Ninian's work, which had been almost extinguished among the Cumbrian Britons and Southern Picts of Galloway by Kentigern³ or Mungo, the patron saint of Glasgow, a contemporary of Columba, and one

¹ Skene, *Celt. Scot.*, ii. 107.

² Bede, iii. 8.

³ Skene, *Celt. Scot.*, ii. 179.

who represented the Welsh or British rather than the Irish type of organisation. Enough has been said to trace the origin of a Christianity which had already taken firm hold of Northern Britain while Gregory was still thinking of the fair young English boys in the slave-market of Rome, and which was destined speedily to come into collision with the Roman system on the Tyne, the Trent, and the Ouse, and on the banks of the Thames itself. The date of Columba's death, 597, is the very year in which Augustine landed in Thanet. Such a coincidence may well give the key-note on which we pause before entering on the history of the Saxon, or, more accurately, of the English Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

IF the Church historian has his own special difficulties to meet, and enigmas to solve, he may at least congratulate himself, in commencing this period of history, that he need not entangle himself far in the relations of the Picts and Scots, nor attempt to decide how far Vortigern, Hengist, Horsa, and the rest of the personages of the earlier portions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are mythical or historical beings. It will suffice that when the lurid tempest of the Teutonic invasion of Britain has cleared away, we may discern the hardy Saxon race in full possession of the land from the German Ocean to the Severn, and from the British Channel to the Forth. Westward and northward the remnant of the Celtic Britons held the remote regions. Cornwall and Devon were theirs in whole or in part. Wales sheltered tribes which the Romans had scarcely civilised. And through parts of Cumberland and the Western Lowlands of Scotland up to the Clyde a British kingdom held sway for some centuries. Northward again beyond the Forth the Highlands of Scotland were held, as they still are, by Celtic races.

But our subject does not call us to the dubious task of attempting to describe the successive steps of the Saxon conquest. It suffices for us that in the death-throes of the Western Roman Empire during the first half of the fifth century, the Roman forces were with-

drawn from Britain. The imperial centralisation had destroyed self-reliance and power of organisation among the natives, and Britain fell an easy prey to the Saxon invaders. How long any remnant of British Christianity and civilisation may have lingered in some of the cities is unknown. Theon, a so-called archbishop of London,¹ and Thadioc, bishop of York, are named by mediæval chronicles as retiring into Wales with their clergy about the year 586. Certainly those imperial cities, and perhaps some others, may claim a continuous existence since the days of the Roman Empire in this island. It is, therefore, quite conceivable that the statement just mentioned may rest upon some vague tradition of vestiges of the ancient island Christianity not quite extirpated by the Saxons. But that a hierarchy remained within about ten years of the arrival of Augustine seems quite inconsistent with known history. It is clear that when Augustine landed in 597 he found the Saxons entirely heathen, and the country broken up into many kingdoms, commonly known as the Heptarchy.

In tracing the origin of Saxon Christianity it must be already clear that the mutual action of three distinct Churches has to be considered : the Roman mission of Augustine; the Scoto-Irish Church, spreading ever southward past the Forth, the Tweed, and the Humber ; and the remnant of the ancient British Church seated chiefly in Wales.

The latter may most fitly be taken first.

This order arises from its claim to be the original British Church, and its consequent possession of the right of precedence. It is also more convenient, because by reason of an angry isolation from its Saxon foes, it

¹ R. Wendover in ann. 586; Matt. Westm.

stands apart from the subsequent history of English Christianity.

The earlier history of the British Church has already been traced to the middle of the fifth century. Since that time a thick veil had fallen over it. Isolated from continental connections, but not without frequent intercourse with Ireland, it had been driven back westward. On either shore of the Bristol Channel, through Wales, and in Cumberland it stood at bay, presenting a sullen front to the heathen foe.

When it was brought once more into contact with Roman Christianity through Gregory's mission, the British, like the Irish, Church had become somewhat of an anachronism. It seemed to have been sleeping, and awoke to find a world that had changed. It took with it into its cave the Christianity of the age of Augustine and of Jerome; or at least of the next age, that of Hilary, of Germanus, and other Gallic worthies. Then came the deluge of barbarians which shut out the distant world from view. That world had not stood still; customs had changed; doctrines had been modified; in particular the great papal idea had fructified and grown exceedingly. The empire had departed from Rome, and its patriarch, no longer overshadowed by imperial grandeur, represented, if anyone did, the greatness and majesty of the Empire city. Leo the Great had worn the pontifical diadem, and left the patriarchate of Rome a grand position to any successor who was worthy to follow him. Such a successor was Gregory at the era now before us, a man of high political skill, of great administrative vigour, adapted above most to push to far-reaching consequences the notion of the Petrine succession, which was now rooted in Rome.

To these changes the British and Scottish Churches

had been insensible. The form in which they were now to encounter them presented itself chiefly in this guise. The Calendar had been changed, the tonsure had been varied, several ritual matters had been modified, and these things were pressed with an overbearing assumption of Petrine authority in the Roman Pontiff to which the earlier Church from which they descended had been an entire stranger. Thus regarded, the collision between the British Church and Gregory's Italian mission becomes one of great interest. It ceases to be a petty provincial squabble over an insignificant observance. It becomes one of the tide-marks of time. It is the meeting (to speak approximately) of the Christianity of the year 400 with that of 600. If the older form was vanquished, it is but a type of the advance of corruption in government, in faith, in doctrine, which under papal leadership was to affect the whole Church.

For the state of the remnant of the British Church which existed in the commencement of the seventh century we are chiefly dependent on Bede, who wrote about 130 years afterwards, partly, as he says, from tradition, and partly from writings of his predecessors in the Saxon Church.

He¹ gives an account of two meetings of the representatives of the British Church with Augustine. At the first of these, held at a place called 'Augustine's Oak,' the chief matter of difference was, that 'they did not keep Easter at the proper time, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth of the moon, which computation is contained in a cycle of eighty-four years.' This must not be confused with the earlier difference which prevailed in the Church of Asia as represented by Polycarp. The custom of the latter Church was to keep Easter

¹ Bede, *Ecc. Hist.*, ii. 91.

on the same day as the Jewish Passover, on whatever day of the week it might fall. The British usage, on the contrary, confined the celebration to Sunday, but reckoned the possible range of the day from the fourteenth to the twentieth, instead of from the sixteenth to the twenty-second, day of the paschal moon as the Roman Church had lately learned to do. Besides this, Bede adds vaguely, 'they were in the habit of doing several other things which were against the unity of the Church.' That these must have been slight ritual matters we may judge from the weight given to the difference about Easter.

There is some ground¹ for thinking that the difference in baptism was that the British Church did not practise the 'trine immersion,' which was insisted on by Roman usage. If so, it is curious to note that the reformed Church of England, which has made provision in its service for '*one baptism*' only, has returned to the earlier practice of the island.

The true account of the Paschal controversy has been confused by incorrect ideas of the British usage being derived from the earlier Asiatic practice. Much has been said of this as though it furnished an incidental proof of the Asiatic and non-Roman origin of the early British Church. But the fact is that the British, together with the rest of the European Churches, adopted the canon of the Council of Nicea, which confined the celebration of Easter to Sunday. During the fourth century they were all at one with the Roman and other Churches in their Easter celebration. But while the isolation of the British remnant from the rest of the Church was enforced by the Saxon invasion there had been two reforms of the Calendar. The last had

¹ *Haddan's Remains*, 320.

been introduced in 525 on the authority of Dionysius Exiguus, to whom the existing calculation of the Christian era is attributed.

The British Church in fact retained the Easter cycle of Sulpicius Severus drawn up about 410, before the flood of barbarian invaders isolated them from the chief Christian centres. This is only one of many proofs showing how the early British Christianity looked to Gaul for its teachers.¹ St. Martin, Germanus, and others were great authorities in Britain. The Gallic origin and dependence of the British Church are certain.

The real dispute was, therefore, an astronomical one. Should the lunar tables from which Easter was determined follow the older cycle of eighty-four years, or should the more recent cycle of nineteen years prevail? All were agreed that Easter should be kept on the Sunday following the Paschal full moon, but then how should that full moon be computed? This astronomical problem divided the two Churches. That the nineteen years' cycle prevailed we have all unconsciously been taught by our prayer-books from our earliest years. There the *nineteen* 'Golden numbers' still stand in array in the 'table for finding Easter Day,' where they are described as 'pointing out the day of the Paschal full moons.'²

No arrangement having been effected at the first meeting with the British representatives, a synod was subsequently held at which, Bede says, were present no

¹ *Haddan's Remains*, 234.

² As no space can be allotted to the investigation of Welsh history, it may be of interest to add here that the Roman computation of Easter was adopted in Wales between 755 and 800. By the conquered 'Welsh' of Somerset and Devon it was received in 731; but not by the Cornish until its conquest by Athelstane in the tenth century.—Haddan and Stubbs, i. 203; Bede, v. 18.

less than 'seven bishops of the Britons, and many most learned men, particularly from their most noble monastery Bancor [near Chester], over which the abbot Dinoth is said to have presided at that time.' Augustine proposed to this assembly as his ultimatum these three things: To conform to the Roman rule about Easter; to confirm by laying on hands after baptism according to Roman usage; and to unite with Augustine's priests in preaching to the Saxons. He promised that he would overlook other differences, the most prominent of which afterwards was the form of the tonsure.

An answer, supposed to have been given by Dinoth the British leader to Augustine, copied early in the seventeenth century by Spelman from a Welsh MS. which he deemed ancient, has often been reproduced. What its real origin may be is a doubtful matter. It runs thus: 'Be it known unto you of a certainty that we are all in obedience to the pope of Rome, and to every true and pious Christian to love each one in his own degree, and to aid him by word and deed to become a son of God. I know no other obedience than this to be due to him whom ye call the pope. And this obedience we are ever ready to pay to him and to every Christian. Besides, we are under the governance of the bishop of Caerleon upon Usk, who is under God over us to keep us in the spiritual way.' Without ability to criticise the Welsh of this document, it is not hazarding much to venture to pronounce its probable date as being subsequent to the Wycliffite writings, whose language it much resembles.

According to Bede, Dinoth suggested to the British bishops that they should take humility as the test of the true servant of Christ. Let them, therefore, observe

whether Augustine rose to receive them ; if so, they might be assured of his mission. He broke down under the test. Seated in his chair he awaited their approach ; his proposals were rejected, and the Welsh refused to own him as their archbishop.

We learn, at least, from this narrative that by the admission of Augustine's party, whose tradition Bede followed, there were 'many bishops and learned men,' according to the standard of that age, among the British remnant. It is clear, also, that they were free from the rapidly growing belief of the authority of the Roman Church. This is the more important inasmuch as the questions raised were not doctrinal but simply matters of discipline, over which the Western patriarch might have been supposed to possess some jurisdiction had such an authority been known to the earlier British Church.

Augustine is said to have threatened the recalcitrant British divines with the vengeance of Heaven. In Bede's judgment this was fulfilled a few years later, when the Saxons slew near Chester 1,200 monks from the Flintshire Bangor. The venerable man added this reflection of the blindest bigotry, one of the very few really offensive sentences which fell from his pen : 'that those perfidious men should feel the vengeance of temporal death also, because they had despised the offer of eternal salvation.'

Thus the Welsh Church stood on one side and looked silently on while the tides of missionary enterprise from other shores ebbed and flowed over the lands it had lost. Perhaps but little was possible to it, but of that little there is no trace. The Briton was unwilling to meet the Saxon except at the point of the spear.

The Roman mission to Canterbury claims the second

place in this eventful history. Ethelbert then reigned in Kent.¹ He had extended his dominion as far as the Humber; and the Saxon Chronicle says that he bore the title of Bretwalda. This must be understood as implying not much more than a supremacy or leadership over the midland Saxon tribes, in addition to his own proper sovereignty. He had married Bertha, the daughter of a king of the Franks, a Christian, who had brought with her as chaplain Liudhard, to whom Bede² gives the title of bishop. A disused British church at Canterbury, dedicated to St. Martin, is said to have been refitted for her use. It is scarcely possible to say what portions of the original edifice may yet remain in the existing Church of St. Martin. But Roman bricks are still plainly discernible in its structure, and the ancient materials have been perpetuated by subsequent Saxon and Norman architects. It is more than a surmise that it was known,³ or believed, in Rome that there was a disposition towards Christianity among the English people.

The opportunity was skilfully seized by the bishop of Rome, Gregory, known justly as the Great, if personal influence and great political ability seizing critical opportunities for extending the papal authority be adopted as the measure of greatness. It would be tedious to repeat the oft-told story of the Latin puns attributed to Gregory in the Roman slave-market on seeing there some fair young English captives.

But Gregory had the intuition of a statesman as well as the zeal of a Christian bishop. Among other traces of his organising faculty, reference may be made

¹ Bede, *Ecc. Hist.*, b. i. c. 25.

² *Ibid.*, b. i. c. 26.

³ See letters of Gregory quoted by Kemble, *The Saxons in England*, b. ii. c. i. p. 25.

to a letter written between 590 and 595 to a presbyter proceeding to some estate of Gregory in Gaul.¹ He was directed to purchase out of the proceeds English youths of seventeen or eighteen years of age, to be brought up in monasteries where they might be fitted for the service of God. History repeats itself. In our own age a rescued slave has been appointed to the missionary bishopric of the Niger ; and East African boys, delivered from the hands of slave-dealers and educated in India, have been sent back to the aid of their fellow-countrymen in the work of the missions on the coast from which they were originally taken.

Without dwelling on the delays and the difficulties against which Gregory struggled in the timidity of the agents employed, it is sufficient to say that in the year 596 he despatched Augustine, the head of a Roman monastery, with about forty companions, on a mission to England, where they probably landed in the year 597 in the island of Thanet. There king Ethelbert gave them an interview in the open air, fearing that under a roof he might be subjected to magic arts. Augustine advanced with whatever ecclesiastical pomp he could muster. A silver cross, and a painted picture of the Saviour, were borne in procession ; and singing litanies, then usual in religious processions, the band of monks came into the presence of the king.

Whatever may have been his secret intentions, Ethelbert answered cautiously : ‘ Your words and promises are very fair ; but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed, with the whole English nation. But, because you strangers are

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 5.

come from far into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but rather give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with necessary sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach, and gain as many as you can to your religion.'

The king then assigned to them a residence in Canterbury. They entered that city, as before, in procession, singing and bearing their painted image and the silver cross. Thus Canterbury, the principal seat of the Kentish race, attained the proud position of the Metropolitan See of England, Augustine being soon afterwards consecrated bishop in Gaul.

The news which reaches our shores from distant parts of the world with tidings of the missionary success for which prayers are continually ascending, may make us more sensitive to a rejoicing letter from Gregory¹ to the bishop of Alexandria announcing the success of his efforts for Britain. Having spoken of the Christian sympathy they had felt for the state of the English, 'unbelieving and worshipping stocks and stones,' he writes of the emissary whom he had sent forth for their conversion, and proceeds: 'News has now reached me of his safety and his work. The miracles glancing forth among that people from him and his band are so great that the days of the Apostles might seem to be repeated. Last Christmas more than ten thousand English are said to have been baptised by our brother and fellow-bishop. I have sent you this news that you may know what to tell your people of Alexandria, and what you are doing in the ends of the world. For your prayers are present though in person you are not there.'

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 12.

The king and people of Kent appear to have received Christianity without much difficulty. Gregory afterwards sent some additional ecclesiastics to the aid of Augustine, together with copious instructions, which may be seen in Bede,¹ a strange mixture of superstition and sound common sense. He gave besides some sacred vessels, vestments, and church ornaments; also relics of apostles and martyrs, which never failed Gregory. Books moreover were sent, of which doubtful catalogues have been given from mediæval writers.² Lastly, the ominous gift of a pall is named by Bede, the token of a subjection that was to last nearly a thousand years.

In its ancient form the *pallium*, or pall, was a cloak which might be worn by any person, and had nothing official in its character. The emperor's pallium was naturally distinguished by splendour. To make a present of such a robe of dignity became a mark of imperial favour. As the bishops of Rome began to affect imperial prerogatives, they also adopted this mode of distinguishing persons whom they desired to honour. These at first were not necessarily of metropolitan rank.³ But the gift was soon limited to that degree. As encroachments went on, it became admitted that no archbishop should be deemed to exercise full jurisdiction until he had received the pall from the reigning pope. In its later form it was reduced to the mere strip with two arms to go round the shoulders, which may to this day be seen in the armorial bearings of the see of Canterbury.

Gregory planned an organisation of the English Church which was never completed. Canterbury (or perhaps rather London) was to have twelve suffragan

¹ See also Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 14.

² Ibid., iii. 29.

³ Robertson, iv. 133.

bishops. York was to be an archiepiscopal see, with the same number of suffragans. This plan was carried out in Augustine's time only so far as the consecration of Justus to the see of Rochester, and of Mellitus to that of London. Rochester¹ was the capital of West Kent, with a chief or king of its own subordinate to the king of Kent. Hence the peculiarity of its ecclesiastical position. Its bishop was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury until 1148, and he still bears the title of provincial chaplain to the Archbishop. Gregory died in the year 604 or 605, and Augustine did not long survive him. The Archbishop and many of his successors, together with kings of Kent, were laid in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was built by Ethelbert.

Antiquaries have often traced local English usages to the notions and practices of our heathen forefathers. The following letter of Gregory,² written 601, to Mellitus, a member of the second mission, will tend to show how possible this may be. In a former letter Gregory had exhorted King Ethelbert to destroy the heathen temples. He now revokes this injunction, and says: 'The idolatrous fanes ought not to be thrown down. But the idols should be destroyed, the temples sprinkled with consecrated water, altars should be reared, and relics deposited. If the temples are well built, they should be turned from the worship of demons to the service of the true God. Thus the people will come to the familiar spot more readily, and be brought to the acknowledgment of God. They have been accustomed to sacrifice many oxen to the demons; some festival should turn their minds in the right direction. On the

¹ Kemble, *Saxons of England*, i. 148; Freeman, iv. 369.

² Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 37.

day of dedication, or the days of the martyrs whose relics are there, let them make booths round the re-dedicated temple, and celebrate the day with religious feasting. But they must slaughter the animals for food to the praise of God, and thank the Giver of all for their abundance. For it is quite impossible to cut off everything at once from hardened minds. He who would scale a lofty height must advance by steps, not by bounds.' The feasting at the village wakes, thus continued under new auspices from heathen times, has been persistent enough. Whether anything of the *religious* character which Gregory described has survived or was ever mingled with them, except in some ceremonial fashion, may well be doubted.

Laurentius succeeded Augustine at Canterbury. The precarious hold which Christianity had yet obtained is manifested by the following strange story.

Heathen princes succeeded to power in these newly formed dioceses. Mellitus and Justus felt themselves obliged to retire into Gaul. Laurentius¹ was preparing to follow, when in the dead of night the blessed Prince of the Apostles appeared to him, and sharply scourging him a long time, asked of him, with apostolical severity, 'Why he would forsake the flock which he had himself committed to him; or, when he deserted them, to what shepherds he would commit Christ's sheep that were in the midst of wolves?' The next morning Laurentius showed to the king his lacerated back, and described his supernatural chastisement. The astonished monarch, terrified at such apostolical vigour, abjured heathenism and invited back the exiled bishops. Justus returned to Rochester; but London refused to receive Mellitus,

¹ Bede, ii. vi.

who soon afterwards, on the death of Laurentius, became the third Archbishop of Canterbury.

It would be more agreeable to pass over these more discreditable passages in the mediæval history. But trickery is too manifestly stamped on the artifices by which the men of those ages obtained influence over the minds of the simple barbarians amongst whom their work lay. The Church was rapidly learning those arts of deception which in succeeding centuries ripened into the gigantic frauds of the forged decretals and other documents which have upborne the greatest historical falsehood the world has seen, the fabric of Papal power.

Mellitus also died in 624, and was succeeded by Justus, bishop of Rochester, who in due time received the pall from Rome. Under the auspices of Justus, Christianity no longer owned the Thames as its boundary, but made a considerable advance into the northern regions of England. Paulinus, who had accompanied Mellitus and Justus on the second mission sent out by Gregory to strengthen the hands of Augustine, was consecrated bishop by Justus, and was attached as chaplain to a Kentish princess on her marriage to Edwin, king of Northumbria. Thus as it had been in Kent so now in Northumbria, a Christian queen was the means of opening the door for the faith. Edwin is described¹ as 'a man of extraordinary sagacity, who often sat by himself a long time, silent with his tongue, but deliberating in his heart how he should proceed, and to which religion he should adhere.' Influence of various kinds was brought to bear upon king Edwin before his indecision was ended. The pope, Boniface V., wrote letters to him exhorting him to abandon his idolatry, and to

¹ Bede, ii. 9.

his queen, entreating her not to relax her earnest endeavour to move her husband. To both he sent presents, adapted no doubt, as a Roman might think, to the simple barbarians. To Edwin he said¹: 'We have sent you the blessing of your protector, the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, that is a shirt with one gold ornament, and one garment of Ancyra.' To the queen, in like terms, he sent 'a silver looking-glass and a gilt ivory comb.' Still, Paulinus found Edwin immovable. He, therefore, brought to bear upon him the artifices of superstition. By some means, probably through the queen, though Bede simply supposes it may have been through vision, he became acquainted with a secret of the king's former life. Edwin in his youth was in exile and imminent danger. As he was brooding over his misfortunes at dead of night, a stranger came up to him and asked him why he sat alone there melancholy and watchful. After some parlarce, the stranger foretold deliverance on condition of a promise of entire submission to wholesome counsels. 'Having received this answer, the person that talked with him laid his right hand upon his head, saying: "When this sign shall happen, remember this present occurrence and the discourse that has passed between us, and do not delay the performance of what you now promise." Having uttered these words, he is said to have immediately vanished.' Edwin speedily escaped the perils which surrounded him, recovered his dominions, and became the most powerful sovereign in the north of England.

Paulinus himself may have been the mysterious stranger; but by whatever means he had learned this story it was skilfully used. Coming up to the king, 'he laid his right hand on his head, and asked whether he

¹ Bede, ii. 10.

knew that sign? The king, trembling, was ready to fall down at his feet, but he raised him up,' and bade him fulfil his promise. The account of the council which Edwin called to deliberate on this demand is one of the most interesting and picturesque of those which Bede's pages record.

Coifi, the Saxon chief priest, is said to have declared that their own religion was profitless. For that he himself, the most diligent in the worship of their deities, had received few benefits, while others less devout were in higher favour with the king and more prosperous in all things. He was, therefore, of opinion that if the Christian doctrines should prove better and stronger, they ought to be accepted. This peculiarly personal and worldly line of reasoning stands, however, in contrast with the higher strain of another chieftain. 'When I compare the life of man on earth with the uncertain future, it seems to me like a familiar occurrence at a winter feast. The hearth is glowing in the middle of the hall, which is warm with good cheer. The tempest of rain or snow is howling without; and thou, O king, art seated with thy chiefs and officers. Then flits a sparrow rapidly through the hall. At one door it enters, at the other it departs. For the moment it is sheltered from the wintry storm, but after the brief space of tranquillity, returning from the winter it had left to the winter again, it passes away from sight. So appears for short space this life of man; but what follows it, or what went before it, we know not. Wherefore, if this new doctrine brings anything more it deserves to be followed.' Other chiefs spoke in a similar strain, and Coifi asked for more information. The result was that Coifi himself, lance in hand and mounted on horseback—both forbidden to the Saxon

priest—led the way to the destruction of the idols, in a spot near York identified by Bede's description.

Edwin, 'with all the nobility of his nation and a very large number of the common sort, received the faith, and the washing of holy regeneration in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 627.' Thus Paulinus became the first prelate of the illustrious see of York; and the site of its glorious minster was consecrated by the erection of such a church as Saxon art was able to rear.

North Lincolnshire, or Lindsey, was at this time subject to Northumbria and received Christianity from the preaching of Paulinus. It is manifest that a rude and uneducated people converted so suddenly, may have brought with them a considerable amount of simple credence, and even excited earnestness; but their knowledge of their new faith must have been slight indeed. Bede relates as an anecdote communicated to him by one who had heard it from an aged man, that the latter remembered having been himself baptised at noon day by the bishop Paulinus, in the presence of king Edwin, with a great multitude of the people, in the river Trent. He described Paulinus as being 'tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose very slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic.' Evidently the dignified Italian ecclesiastic was distinguished among the fair burly Saxons. Meantime archbishop Justus died, and was succeeded by Honorius, the fifth archbishop of Canterbury. To him and to Paulinus the pope (also named Honorius) sent the pall in the year 634.

Edwin fell in battle in 633, and Northumbria was overwhelmed with frightful massacres by a confederation of the heathen Mercians and the Christian Britons. Paulinus fled, with some of the royal family and trea-

tures, into Kent, where he died as bishop of Rochester. Thus ended the triumphant progress of the Roman mission of Augustine. The feeble remnant of Christianity in the north was ministered to by James, a deacon.

Honorius, the archbishop, died in 653. In his days the first Englishman was raised to the episcopate: Ithamar of Rochester, 'equal in life and learning to his predecessors.' Honorius was the last of the Italian band who had accompanied Augustine. Five of them in succession had occupied the Metropolitan See. None of them had developed any considerable power, and those who read their lives at greater detail will acknowledge that little of interest can be added to this rapid sketch. Their remains lay side by side in the north porch of the Church of Augustine.¹ Honorius, fifty years before, had followed the silver cross when Augustine entered Canterbury, and when he was laid among his predecessors, this first epoch of the Italian mission closed in darkness and discouragement.

We must turn now to a race of greater vigour than these soft Italians, and trace a mission from the north which succeeded where they had failed.

A few years after the death of Edwin, the kingdom of Northumbria revived under Oswald, who belonged to the family superseded by Edwin, during whose reign they had found shelter in Scotland. There, says Bede, 'they were catechised according to the doctrine of the Scots, and regenerated by the grace of baptism.' As soon as Oswald was established in his dominion, his thoughts turned naturally not to the fugitive bishop Paulinus, but² 'to the elders of the Scots, desiring they would send him a bishop.' In answer to this appeal, the Columban brotherhood in Iona sent one of

¹ Thorn, *Chron. Abb. S. Aug. Cant.*, i. 11. ² Bede, iii. 3.

their number, the Apostolical Aidan, into England. Bede describes him as 'a man of singular meekness, piety, and moderation; zealous in the cause of God, though not altogether according to knowledge. For he was wont to keep Easter Sunday according to the custom of his country, which we have before so often mentioned.'

Aidan found on the coast of Northumberland an islet which he deemed might be to England the counterpart of Iona. Lindisfarne, or the Holy Island, is about a mile and a half distant from the mainland, with which indeed it is connected at low water. It is somewhat smaller than Iona, being about two miles and a quarter in length and something more than a mile in breadth. Lindisfarne, like Iona, was repeatedly ravaged by the Northmen, and here also the existing ruins belong to the more stately monastery founded after the Norman Conquest.

In this island Aidan planted a settlement of the Scottish character. Its humble thatched huts were grouped round the oratory, and a band of Iona brethren reproduced on English ground their accustomed life and labours under an unchanged mode of government. It was not after the more lordly pattern of the episcopacy known to Bede, but he can scarcely conceal his admiration of it.

'Aidan,'¹ says he, 'who was the first bishop of the place, was a monk, and was always wont to lead a monastic life with all his people. Hence after him all the bishops of that place until this day exercise the episcopal functions in such sort, that while the abbot, who is chosen by the bishop with the consent of the brethren, governs the monastery, all the priests, deacons,

¹ *Life of St. Cuthbert*, xvi.

and the other orders observe in all things the monastic rule with the bishop himself.'

Thus it came to pass that the see of York and the Church of Paulinus still lay desolate, and were not restored until Wilfrid renewed the hierarchical system of the Continent. From Lindisfarne Northumbria received the Gospel. King Oswald himself acted as interpreter. 'It was most delightful,' says Bede, repeating the story of events which older monks of Jarrow might almost remember in his younger days, 'to see the king himself interpreting the Word of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many from the region of the Scots came daily into Britain, and with great devotion preached the word of faith to those provinces of the English over which king Oswald reigned. Churches were built in divers places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; possessions and lands were given of the king's bounty to build monasteries; the younger English were by their Scottish masters instructed; and greater care and attention were bestowed upon the rules and observance of regular discipline.' Thus spread Scottish Christianity with its characteristic monastic type through Northumbria.

After a life of great Christian activity, Aidan died, and was buried in the Holy Island. He was succeeded, 652, by Finan, another of the Iona brethren. Bede eulogises his Christian character and diligence; but bestows a chapter on the expression of regret for his irregularity in the matter of the Paschal Calendar.

In those days the great central kingdom of Mercia, under the fierce heathen king Penda, was the chief obstacle to the conversion of England. It was Penda,

in confederacy with Britons, who slew Edwin in battle, and overthrew the mission of Paulinus 633. Penda in 642 again ravaged Northumbria, and the saintly Oswald fell in battle. But Northumbria revived under Oswy, and as the Mercian king grew old, his son Peada married the daughter of king Oswy, and Mercia ceased its virulent opposition to the Gospel. Oswy made it a condition of the marriage that Peada should be baptised.¹ He 'heard the preaching of the truth, the promise of the heavenly kingdom, the hope of the resurrection and immortality.' 'I will be a Christian,' he replied, 'though the maiden be denied me.' 'Accordingly he was baptised by bishop Finan, with his nobles and soldiers and servants, and returned with four priests, one of them the illustrious Cedd. Thus Mercia received the faith from the Scottish mission. Penda fell in battle a heathen to the last; but he had withdrawn his opposition to the Gospel, despising only, as Bede characteristically adds, those who had received the faith but failed to obey it. 'Contemptible wretches were they,' said the old heathen, 'who would not obey the God in whom they believed.'

The influence of king Oswy of Northumbria spread, after Penda's death, over the larger part of England. Now it is that we find Christianity reintroduced among the East Saxons for the first time since the flight of Mellitus. About 654, Cedd received the episcopate and was sent amongst that people on the invitation of their king, a friend of Oswy, who had received baptism, like Peada, at the hands of Bishop Finan. Cedd did not perhaps succeed very well in establishing the Scottish discipline on the Thames. 'He collected,' says Bede, 'the servants of Christ's household, and taught them to

¹ Bede, iii. 21.

observe the discipline of regular life, as far as those rude people were then capable.'

The neighbours of the East Saxons, the East Angles of Suffolk and Norfolk, had earlier received the Gospel, and from a different source. Sigebert, an East Anglian king, had been driven into exile, and in Gaul had embraced Christianity. On the return of this king, Felix, a Burgundian, a man of missionary spirit, offered himself for Christ's service. Sigebert placed him as bishop of East Anglia in 631 at Dunwich, a place now under the waves of the German Ocean, on the coast of Suffolk, but the seat of that episcopacy until the time of the Conquest. Felix still retains some hold on East Anglian memory, in the town of Felixstow on that sandy coast. This mission, it will be seen, had so far no connection with the Scottish movement which it preceded. It was from Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury, that Felix received commission. But at the same time Irish influence penetrated there also. Fursey, an Irish monk of legendary fame, founded a monastery in East Anglia, and is said to have wrought great results by preaching and example.

For the conversion of Wessex we are also to look a little backward, and neither to Canterbury, nor (directly at least) to Northumbria. Birinus, a man of uncertain origin, offered himself to Pope Honorius for missionary service amongst the English. Landing in Wessex, about 634, he found the people utter pagans, and concluded that his work lay there. He gained access to the king, where again Northumbrian influence meets us. Oswald,¹ 'the most holy and victorious king of the Northumbrians,' was sponsor to the Wessex king, receiving him as he came forth from the font, and then taking his

¹ Bede, iii. 7.

daughter to wife, became his son-in-law. Thus Wessex received Christianity; and Dorchester, now only a small country place near Oxford, became the seat of its bishop until Winchester and Lincoln in succession robbed it of its honours.

Such is a brief sketch of the progress of Christianity in England. Those who would search more narrowly into its ebbs and flows, and who would, therefore, learn a more tender patience in dealing with converted heathen of modern times, would have to recount sad stories of lapses, and bloodshed, and revivals of heathenism, met by renewed and devoted labours. To enter into these details a general narrative will not serve. They have been most exactly recounted by Professor Bright, in his 'Chapters on Early English Church History.'

Bede tells us that whilst Aidan lived the dispute about Easter between the Scottish and Roman parties slept, so great was the veneration in which he was held by both. His successor, Finan, had to bear more of the brunt of controversy, but remained firm to the Scottish discipline. Colman, another of the Iona brotherhood, succeeded Finan about 661, and then the dispute came to a climax. King Oswy himself held the Scottish usage, but his wife had been brought up in Kent and had a Kentish chaplain. His son also had been instructed by Wilfrid, an ecclesiastic who had been in Rome. Thus the Roman usage found advocates in the royal family; and the minds of the people being much disturbed on this question, a council was held at Whitby¹ to decide it. The discussion was long, and was treated by the heated divines as if the truth of the Gospel and the salvation of souls depended on the

¹ Bede, iii. 25.

decision. Wilfrid, who was the chief Roman champion, at last brought the question to the asserted practice of St. Peter, and his authority as the Apostle to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven had been given. At this point king Oswy broke in with the enquiry, whether both parties allowed that to be true. Learning that they did, he spoke thus: 'I say unto you that he is that door-keeper whom I will not contradict, but, as far as I know and am able, I desire in all things to obey his decrees; lest when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is admitted to have the keys.' The cause being thus lost, Colman with some others withdrew into Scotland. Chad, and the other Scottish ecclesiastics remaining in England, accepted the decision. Chad, in particular, submitted to reconsecration at the hands of Archbishop Theodore, and was removed from the see of York to that of Lichfield, with which his memory is indelibly associated.¹

But the defeated Calendar and heretical tonsure did not linger very long, even in their northern home. The abbot of Jarrow² wrote an elaborate epistle to the Pictish king urging upon him the Roman usage, and the monks of Iona themselves conformed³ to it in the year 716, though not without a troublesome schism. Doubtless there is an ecclesiastical and social convenience, possibly also some higher consequent advantage, in being freed from trifles which tend to separate and prevent good men from active cooperation. But having regard to the manner and objects with which this controversy had been pressed and this submission made, there were omens of evil to come. It is scarcely possible to read the arguments and observe the warmth of the

¹ Bede, iii. 27.

² Bede, v. 21.

³ Skene, *Celt. Scot.*, ii. 278, 288.

aggressive party without remembering the Apostle's words¹: 'Ye observe days and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you.' 'Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.'

We may here pause to review the state of England after the Council of Whitby, when the amalgamation of the two sections of the Church of England was resolved upon by the leading Saxon kings.

It is manifest that the chief measure of missionary success is to be ascribed to the Scottish mission. The Italian work had in great measure collapsed, except in Kent, which retained its allegiance. In all the rest of the island the northern energy is more or less distinctly traceable. Northumbria and Mercia were evangelised, and London, with Essex, recovered by the mission from Iona. East Anglia and Wessex owed much to the same source.

It may be asked whether any distinctive peculiarities may be noticed in the two rival missions. It seems certain that some may be traced. The very mode of conducting the ritual controversy, already noticed, shows a difference, and is indicated in Bede's narrative. At first sight one rigid bigotry seems arrayed against another. But close observation may satisfy us that the English instinct is not altogether false. Celtic Christianity to a great degree felt itself struggling for liberty, while Rome was aiming at domination. It is tolerably clear from Bede's account of Augustine's negotiations with the British bishops,² that they resented the haughtiness and rejected the dictation of the foreigner, far more than they cherished their own custom. In the Council of Whitby, in which the Celtic computation of

¹ Gal. iv. 10; Col. ii. 16.

² Page 37.

Easter was rejected, Bede¹ says, that many had begun to 'fear, lest, having received the name of Christians, they might happen to run or to have run in vain.' This shows that the Roman party pressed their Calendar as involving something vital to salvation. Wilfrid, also, when speaking at that council, after allowing for the 'rustic simplicity but pious intentions' of Columba and others, declared that henceforth they would 'certainly sin if having heard the decrees of the apostolic see, yea rather of the universal Church, and that the same are confirmed by Holy Writ, they refused to follow them.' Colman and his friends were content to stand simply on their full liberty to follow the usage of their predecessors, holy men and true. We may recognise here, in brief, the ever-lost battle of the Middle Ages—the Papacy step by step quenching the liberty of the national Churches.

Another very marked distinction, which will enlist the sympathy of the English churchman, is the love for Holy Scripture conspicuous in all the Columban brotherhood of Iona, contrasted with the ritual formalism of the Roman mission. This receives illustration from the singular account² given of Columba leaving Ireland for Iona. Columba had copied St. Finnian's manuscript of the Psalms. A question arose as to the ownership of the copy. The Irish king decided, that 'as to every cow belongs its calf, so to every book belongs its son-book' (or copy). From this (as one of the stories has it), the feud arose which led to Columba settling in Iona. The study of Holy Scripture thus manifested continued to distinguish his brotherhood. Bede, when apologising for their Easter irregularity on account of 'their being so far from the rest of the world,' adds,

¹ Bede, iii. 25.

² Reeves' *Adamnan*, 249.

‘wherefore they only diligently practised such works of piety and charity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings.’ When Bede is describing the life of Segeni, the abbot of Iona, who sent forth Aidan, he says: ‘His course of life was so different from the slothfulness of our times, that all those who bore him company, whether they were shorn monks or laymen, were employed in meditation, that is, either in reading the Scriptures or learning the Psalms.’

When Aidan was first sent out on his mission it was in consequence of his admonishing¹ a brother of harsher temperament, that the people ought to be ‘by degrees nourished with the Word of God;’ and, as far as we can dimly discern through Bede’s love of marvels, the Word of God was the guide of these early Scottish ecclesiastics as far as they were instructed in it.

It is not necessary to repeat what has been said of the loose ecclesiastical organisation of the Scoto-Irish Church, but for good or for evil it presents marked characteristics.

Our review of this period would be very incomplete and inadequate if we omitted more distinct notice of the miraculous incidents grouped around us at every step taken under the guidance of Bede. They are related with a childlike simplicity and confidence most refreshing and attractive. They are not thrust into the narrative, but are inwoven into its fabric with an ease which is simply the expression of the guileless faith of an artless man. It is not easy to judge by the same indulgent standard the more deliberate and subtle Italian intellects of Gregory’s emissaries. The blind man restored by Augustine, the scourged back of Laurentius,

¹ Bede, iii. 5.

the vision of Edwin utilised by Paulinus, raise unpleasant surmises. But the marvels of Saxon saintly life read more like the dreams and fancies of childhood than the calculations of the priestly intellect. The good king Oswald was the hero of the Christian faith in Northumbria. Where he hastily reared a cross before one of his great victories the Saxons fondly believed sick men to be healed ; and where he fell in battle the very dirt of the earth mingled with water became a healing potion. Nay, a tired horse rolling on the sacred spot rose refreshed, and some of the earth tied up in a cloth preserved the post of the house on which it hung in the midst of a conflagration. In the tent where Aidan died there was a post against which the expiring saint reclined. The post escaped twice afterwards when the building of which it was part was burned. Manifestly the post was a sacred thing, and its chips placed in water were found to possess healing power. Such were the stories which Bede learned by the monastery fire from wondering Saxons. We readily give our indulgence to the simplicity of the man, wise and learned beyond his times, but childlike in a credence, which had never been shaken into harsh suspicions. Nothing need check such indulgence save the reflections which knowledge of mankind and of history must bring. The simplicity of the saint becomes the superstition of the ignorant and the unenlightened. Superstition clouds the fair face of the truth of God, and darkens the Gospel ; and so step by step man departs from the simplicity of the revealed word, and becomes a slave to his own foolish imaginations.

One additional remark may be made in closing this chapter. It has often been urged that the true history of Christianity in England tends to reduce its Roman

origin to a very narrow compass. The British Church which survived at the end of the sixth century in the west of the island, and the Celtic Christianity of Scotland which spread so rapidly southward, owed nothing to Rome as far as authentic history can acknowledge. The Christianising work of the Roman mission has been shown to have been very limited in its effective results.

But that which still more effectually marks off the English Church from the Roman system is the absolute freshness of its origination. The imperial Christianity of Constantine and his successors was obliterated. No bishop of London or York remained to carry on the imperial traditions and all the secularised usages of the prelates of the empire. The civil law with all the state-officialism was gone. The Saxon bishops were for the most part seated in country settlements, avoiding even such cities as had survived the general desolation. Their jurisdiction, though it might borrow much from continental customs, was derived from the practice of ancient Germanic freedom. They sat¹ with the chiefs and wise men of the tribe, and exercised an authority jointly with the secular officials which, perhaps, was never very clearly defined, and which now evades exact determination. As the claims of Rome were advanced century after century, so did the English Church, like its continental compeers, yield gradually something of its freedom. But it will be for the history of the Norman centuries to unfold how the papal and the civil law threw their enslaving bonds around the liberty of the Church of England, and reduced its archbishop to the rank of a papal delegate.

It will be shown hereafter how the Norman noble

¹ Stubbs, *Constit. Hist.*, i. 232.

learned to identify himself with the English people, and how under his leadership the civil law of the empire was rejected by the vigour of early parliaments, and the common law, the inheritance of Saxon freedom, maintained in its supremacy. Scientific arrangement and accuracy of definition may have been thus lost to our legal systems, but the precious heritage of liberty has survived. We have been taught in civil matters to trace the continuity of our government, our laws, our history, our local usages, to those whom for convenience we call Saxons, but who were proud to call themselves as we do, 'the English folk.' Strange it is that any should wish to link their church life with that imperialised interval which broke in upon our national Church from the eleventh to the sixteenth century! Strange that the bishop and synod of the canon and the civil law of the papalised mediæval period, or of the imperial tyranny of Constantinople, should be the model for study and imitation, rather than the bishop of that free English race whose civil traditions we inherit, whose words are still our words, whose episcopate we have received! That imperial system, that separated ecclesiastical order have, alas! in no small degree been the cause of divisions that perhaps may never be closed. The institutions of one age may not precisely in detail suit the changed circumstances of another age. But the nature of a mighty race is ineradicable, and principles endure. If the ecclesiastical system of England is ever again to be national in any sense that may be indisputable, the lines upon which it must work must be traced, not in the papalised system which severed the haughty ecclesiastic of the fourteenth or fifteenth century from his fellow-men, but in the Saxon, or more accurately, the English, association of Church and

State—sovereign, bishop, and people—deciding on their common interests. Let the true love of antiquity temper false ecclesiastical pride ; then will the English Church recur to its origin, and English principles rule in the Church as they do in the State.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORGANISATION AND LEARNING OF THE EARLY
ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

THE very name Anglo-Saxon is objected to, and in some sense rightly, by some of our leading historians. They urge that the term is misleading, as though the people whom we thus style were not our bone and our flesh. Did they not, it is asked, call themselves the English people? Are not we, by inheritance of race, of customs, and of language, the same and not another nation? All this may be true, and yet the prevalence of the name may imply a certain convenience in its use. And surely in speaking of the Church of England after the Conquest, we find it separated from the Church before the Conquest by sufficiently conspicuous distinctions. It is, therefore, at least a matter of convenience and clearness to retain a nomenclature which marks off a defined period of history.

The present chapter will deal with the principal events in the history of the early Saxon-Church during the century and a-half which followed its missionary stage of existence. During that time it passed from the first fervour of conversion, and the first excitement of the novelties of before unexplored knowledge, into coldness, laxity, and indifference. There will be found here no complete chronicle of events, but a summary account only of the leading circumstances and personages, from the missionary epoch of the Church until the approx-

imate union of the Saxon tribes under Egbert early in the ninth century.

After the death of Honorius, the last of the early Italian archbishops of Canterbury, a West Saxon, named Frithona, who assumed the appellation Deusdedit, was appointed to the Metropolitan See, 655. He died in 664, the date usually assigned to the Council at Whitby, which united the Church of England. The appointment of his successor became at this crisis a matter of great importance. It was needful that the new archbishop should be a man who would conciliate both parties. The kings of Kent and Northumbria thought they had found such a person in Wighard, a Kentish priest of English extraction. In order to give the greater weight to his office, he was sent to Italy to receive consecration at the hands of Vitalian, then bishop of Rome. There he died of the plague, and to avoid further delay the two kings left the choice of the new Archbishop to Vitalian. Thus, by the hand of its two leading sovereigns was the Church of England sent forth on the orbit in which for many centuries it was to revolve as a satellite of the Roman See. What might have been its better fortune, or into what worse heresies it might have fallen, had the decision at Whitby been different, it is vain to speculate. It was henceforth to share the common lot of Western Christendom until the day of Reformation should arise. The other island Churches, of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, followed it in this submission, but at later and at different periods.

The appointment to Canterbury having been thus left to Vitalian, he replied at some length to Oswy king of Northumbria, congratulating him on his piety and his orthodoxy about Easter, and implying that there was some difficulty in finding a suitable person. 'We

have not been able,' said Vitalian,¹ 'considering the length of the journey, to find at present a man docile, and qualified in all respects to be a bishop, according to the tenor of your letters. But as soon as such a suitable person shall be found, we will send him with proper instructions to your country, that he may, by word of mouth, and through the divine oracles, with the assistance of God, root out all the enemy's tares throughout your island.'

Vitalian, accordingly, commenced enquiries which ultimately led him to select two ecclesiastics, of whom we have this description. Hadrian was an abbot near Naples,² 'by nation an African, well versed in holy writ, experienced in monastical and ecclesiastical discipline, and excellently skilled both in the Greek and Latin tongues.' Theodore was a monk then in Rome, 'born at Tarsus in Cilicia, a man well instructed in worldly and divine literature, as also in Greek and Latin; of known probity of life, and venerable for age, being sixty-six years old.' Hadrian having refused the archbishopric himself, prevailed on Vitalian to consecrate Theodore. This was done, but on condition that Hadrian should accompany him into Britain. We are expressly told that this arrangement was made because of some distrust lest Theodore might, 'according to the custom of the Greeks,' introduce anything contrary to true faith into the Church over which he presided. Hadrian, as an African, would look to the Western rather than the Eastern Church, and so might be trusted as a watchful guardian by the side of Theodore. But, alas! the archbishop's exterior was not utterly orthodox, he wore the Eastern tonsure, and had to wait four

¹ Bede, iii. 20.

² Bede, iv. 1.

months before his hair had grown sufficiently to receive the true Petrine crown.

The orthodox Roman tonsure is that which is familiar to us in mediæval paintings. The crown only of the head is shaved, leaving a ring of hair untouched. This, like everything else at Rome, was assumed to be due to the Apostle Peter himself, and was known as Petrine. The much-detested Scottish tonsure,¹ on the other hand, shaved the head in front from ear to ear, leaving no unbroken ring of hair. If this did not come from St. Peter, to whom could it be traced? The 'Clementines,' and 'Recognitions,' the first religious novel, told the curious story of the long contest between St. Peter and Simon Magus, which was generally received as history. Hence anything which was not of Peter might be taken as due to Simon Magus. Accordingly, the Roman party delighted in twitting their Celtic opponents with following that famous heresiarch, and wearing what they were pleased to call his tonsure on their heads. The defect of Theodore was of a different kind. His was not the obnoxious horseshoe of hair. He had the tonsure of St. Paul, who was traditionally reported to have been quite bald. Accordingly the Pauline tonsure shaved or clipped the whole of the head. In this bared condition it required these four months' growth before Theodore's hair had recovered sufficiently to receive the Roman form of tonsure. Then he proceeded with Hadrian into Britain, where he arrived 669. This arrival of the learned Greek with his companion is an era in the history of the Church of England.

His coadjutor, Hadrian, was made abbot of the monastery which Augustine founded, and where all the early archbishops were buried. Theodore made a visi-

¹ Reeve, *Adamnan*, p. 350; Skene, *Celt. Scot.*, ii. 6.

tation of the English portion of the whole island, and to use the words of Bede,¹ 'being everywhere attended and assisted by Hadrian, he disseminated the right rule of life, and the canonical custom of celebrating Easter. This was the first archbishop whom all the English Church obeyed. And forasmuch as they were well-read in sacred and secular literature, they gathered a crowd of disciples. Day by day flowed from them rivers of knowledge to water the hearts of the hearers; and together with the books of holy writ, they taught the arts of poetry, astronomy, and ecclesiastical arithmetic. In testimony of this, some of their scholars are living at this day as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as in their own. From that time also they began in all the churches of the English to learn ecclesiastical music, which till then had been only known in Kent. Thus, Theodore visiting all parts, ordained bishops in proper places, and with their assistance corrected such things as he found faulty.'

The Church of England, as it was left at the death of Theodore, was subject to the jurisdiction of sixteen² bishops under the sole primacy of Canterbury. It was some few years afterwards that Northumbria claimed Metropolitan rank for its chief bishop, and the imperial city of York became the see of an archbishop.

The first synod of the English Church was assembled by Theodore at Hertford 673. Six³ sees were represented. Theodore is said to have presented to this council a book of 'canons of the holy fathers,' doubtless those then of authority in Rome. From this he selected ten canons regulating certain matters of discipline and jurisdiction, which all present subscribed.

It need scarcely be said that the first of these was :

¹ Bede, iv. 2.

² Stubbs, *Constit. Hist.*, i. 219.

³ Bede, iv. 5.

'We will all keep the holy day of Easter on the Sunday after the fourteenth moon (that is, day of the moon) of the first month.' The object of the rest may be described as limiting the jurisdiction and action of the bishops and clergy within their own districts. It was further agreed that a synod should be held twice a year; the August meeting to be held at Cloveshoo. The situation of this place has been a puzzle to antiquarians for centuries. It would be futile to enumerate the guesses which have been ventured as to its locality. All that seems fairly certain is, that it must have been within the dominions of the Mercian¹ king, but also not far from Kent and Wessex. These conditions may point to some place not far from London, which receives support from the fact that Boniface calls the English synod 'Synodus Londinensis.' It is somewhat strange that after so precise a canon there should be no record of another synod at Cloveshoo till seventy years later.

Another synod held by Theodore met at Hatfield 680. Its notice of the Monothelite controversy then active at Constantinople, and its acknowledgment of the first five general councils, shows England as once more entering the European family of nations.

Following the laws of Justinian, Theodore is said to have granted the patronage of churches to any landed proprietor who should endow them on his estate. It has been alleged that hence in the course of time the territorial divisions, called parishes, were constituted. But this subject will require further consideration when the constitution of the Saxon Church comes under review.

It is but a sketch in outline of this eminent archbishop which can be presented here; but even so, it would

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 122; Kemble, ii. 191.

be incomplete without some account of the Penitential which bears his name. Gieseler¹ gives this curt description of this class of literature: 'Instructions how to purchase penitential seasons by singing, by prayer, and by money.'

After the conversion of Constantine it was thought wise to adapt the ancient severe moral discipline of the Church to the world which ostensibly avowed its allegiance. Then it became only too feasible, and apparently necessary, to commute the probation of wealthy and noble sinners for some pecuniary or other service which they might be more willing to render. Hence arose, especially in the Greek Church, the system which has received such a condemnatory description.

Amongst such a people as the Saxons a system of this kind was as natural as it was pernicious. The Saxon code valued almost every offence at a certain pecuniary mulct.² Offences against the life, honour, or property of every man were estimated in money on a scale proportioned to his rank. It was difficult for such a people to learn that the judgment of God proceeded on a different system altogether; and the penitential books failed to teach them that fundamental truth. The following specimen of this singular ecclesiastical arithmetic may suffice to justify Gieseler's pithy definition. It is assigned by the learned collector to Archbishop Dunstan and the year 963. It applies to 'infirm men.'

'One³ day's fasting may be redeemed with a penny, or with two hundred psalms. A year's fasting may be redeemed with thirty shillings, or with freeing a slave that is worth that money. A man for one day's fasting

¹ Vol. ii. p. 195, Clark's transl.

² Kemble, b. ii. 8.

³ Johnson, *Laws and Canons of the Church of England*, pp. 426-449, Oxford ed.

may sing *Beati* six times, and six times *Pater noster*. . . . With one mass twelve days' fasting may be redeemed ; and with ten masses four months' fasting may be redeemed. . . . ' Then follow further commutations for rich men, among them : ' Let him by all possible means procure seven times a hundred and twenty men to fast for him three days, then are there as many fasts kept as there are days in seven years. . . . '

' This is that softening of penance which belongs to wealthy men, and such as abound in friends ; but one in a lower condition cannot make such dispatch ; but, therefore, he must pursue it in his own person with the greater earnestness. And it is most righteous that every one revenge his own crimes on himself by diligent satisfaction ; for it is written, every one shall bear his own burden.'

The comment of a distinguished scholar and antiquarian may possibly have greater weight with some than that of a divine. Kemble¹ indignantly remarks on this system : ' Nothing can more strikingly demonstrate the folly and wickedness of squaring and shaping the unlimited mercy of God by the rule and measure of human intelligence. I am bound to say that I know of no more fatal source of anti-Christian error, no more miserable records of the debasement and degradation of human intellect, no more frightful proof of the absence of genuine religion.'

But, however true this may be with regard to the commuted penance which grew up in the Saxon as in other branches of the Church, it is right to say that the genuine Penitential of Theodore,² as far as it remains from the collection of his disciples, is not open to this precise condemnation. It is in fact a complete

¹ *Saxons in England*, ii. 404.

² Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 173.

code of ecclesiastical discipline, divided methodically under the heads relating to such states of life and such sins as might come under cognisance of the Church authorities. For example, under the first heading, 'Of Drunkenness,' a man in holy orders guilty of this must either abandon the crime or be deposed. A drunken monk must be a penitent for thirty days, a priest for forty, and so on with other gradations. In this manner the season of penitence is marked out for the great variety of human offences, each under its proper division. It ranges upward from a flogging to be inflicted on a boy, or the penitence of a few days, to the usual maximum of fifteen years. The remark obvious to the English churchman, knowing nothing of such a system as this, would perhaps be to this effect. Some stringent discipline of the kind may be necessary in a Church freshly gathered from among the heathen, and surrounded by the abominations of heathen immorality. That it is so the experience and practice of our Indian missions abundantly proves. In these a convert lapsing into open sin is relegated for such time as may be needful into the rank of what the early Church called 'penitents,' that is, persons under a renewed probation suspended from their full church privileges. It seems manifest that something of this kind may have been even more necessary in that early Saxon Church, where, without conversion of heart, and with the most slender knowledge, thousands were baptised at once.

But when this obvious necessity is fossilised into a system—when the test of a sinner's restoration into full church communion is not 'the godly sorrow working repentance unto salvation,' which the Apostle¹ required in the first case upon record, but the serving out a

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 4-11, vii. 8-13.

fixed penal period of so many days or years, the spiritual element is lost, and all becomes human, ecclesiastical, and formal.

It appears, therefore, that the genuine Penitential of Theodore does not recognise commutations and evasions of the fixed penitential periods. For some time afterwards these were deemed irregular. The synod of Cloveshoo in 747, under the second archbishop after Theodore, expressly decreed¹ that no alms should be allowed to diminish the fixed period of penance; that however good it might be to repeat the psalms, to pray often, to bestow alms, yet that the assigned duration of the penitential time must not be shortened on their account. Otherwise, the synod shrewdly argues, it could not have been a hard thing for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, if alms could purchase impunity. Still the fact that the synod notices the subject shows that the practice had already crept in. Nay, it appears to have been already formulated, for current 'penitentials of uncertain authorship' are stigmatised by that synod as admitting 'light and unusual modes of penance for grave offences, and in the prophet's words, sewing pillows to all armholes.'

It requires but little knowledge of human nature to be assured that these commutations for times of penance speedily became the rule rather than the exception. They were a natural fruit of the system. One formality was substituted for another; the debt to the Church was recognised, and the Church was satisfied.

One other matter requires notice. The enumeration of gross sins in the Penitential of Theodore descends into the deepest abysses of human corruption, where it describes and catalogues them with the offensive cool-

¹ Gieseeler, ii. 320; *Hadden's Remains*, p. 324.

ness of documents of this description. How were such sins made known? It must be answered that confession to the parish priest at least once a year was recommended,¹ though Theodore himself declared that confession to God was sufficient. What other statement could be expected from a Greek of that age with whom such an authority as the following from Chrysostom would rank among the very highest? That ancient father, commenting on the apostle's words, let 'a man examine himself,'² says: 'He does not bid one man examine another, but every one himself; making the judgment private, and the trial without witnesses. . . . He bids thee within thy own conscience, none being present but God, who knows all things, to set up a judgment and search after thy sins.'

It may be permitted to remark that one of the rules in Theodore's Penitential tends to confirm the disputed popular derivation of the English appellation of Whitsunday, applied to the day of Pentecost: 'In reverence for the gift of regeneration prayer must be offered on Pentecost in white raiment.' This certainly traces the idea of the White Sunday in England back to the earliest Saxon times, whether it satisfies etymologists or no.

Theodore died A.D. 690, at the age of eighty-eight, having held the see of Canterbury twenty-two years. He was laid with his predecessors in the monastic church of St. Peter and St. Paul, afterwards better known as St. Augustine's.

'Up to this time,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'the archbishops of Canterbury were Roman, but from this time they were English.'

It is singular that, while Bede names his great ser-

¹ *Egbert's Dialogue*, Thorpe, ii. 96; see also Gieseler, ii. 319.

² *Hom. VIII. de Penit.*

vices with the highest respect, no miraculous stories are associated with him in life or death. Was it that the learned Greek was known to hold such legends in disdain, or what influence restrained the credulous monks from the usual play of their imaginations?

Contemporary with Theodore was Wilfrid, who took so prominent a part in the Council of Whitby. His zealous advocacy of the Roman cause has induced both Papal and Protestant writers to dwell on the events of his life at considerable length. But there is another reason for this. His rank, abilities, and highly-wrought energies not only made a deep impression on the men of his age, but secured for him a loving biographer. In the pages of Eddi or Eddius there remain to us a series of pictures of that age in which Saxon and Scot, Gaul and Italian figure. Wilfrid's life of vicissitudes led him from the Tweed to the Tiber, and everywhere his high qualities brought him into prominence. No wonder that such materials should still suggest for him a large place on the historical canvas, and that men should still discuss his misfortunes and his faults. He was appointed to the Northumbrian bishopric after the death of Tuda, Colman's successor.

Dissatisfied with the purity of the English succession, tainted with Scottish ordination, he is said to have sought a purer fount of Episcopal authority in Gaul.¹ Consecrated there, he delayed his return to Britain, and Chad was appointed meanwhile to the see he neglected. After some time Archbishop Theodore reinstated Wilfrid in the northern bishopric. Under him York once more became the chief seat of the Northumbrian bishop, after its long abandonment since the departure of Paulinus. In this position he displayed a magnificence rivalling

¹ Bede, iii. 28.